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# COSSA Washington Update

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## SENATE PANEL BOOSTS NSF, CENSUS, CUTS BJS

On June 26, the Senate Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), made its recommendations for FY 2008 funding for the agencies under the panel's jurisdiction. Two days later, the bill emerged from the full Senate Appropriations Committee. When it will reach the Senate floor is uncertain.

The Subcommittee provided \$6.553 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF). This 10.8 percent increase over the FY 2007 appropriation was slightly more generous than the House Subcommittee mark (see Update, [June 11, 2007](#)). It also exceeded the President's request by \$124.4 million.

NSF's Research and Related Activities account, which funds the research directorates, including the one for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE), received \$5.161 billion, an 8.2 percent increase over the FY 2007 number, and \$24.4 million above the request. The House Subcommittee recommended \$5.139 billion. The Committee report indicated that the Senate wants these additional dollars for Ocean Research (\$18.4 million) and the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR) (\$10.8 million). The panel did not provide funding for the Science and Technology Policy Institute/RADIUS, saying that the Office of Science and Technology Policy should provide the \$4.7 million to pay for it.

The Committee gave the Education and Human Resources (EHR) directorate a major increase to \$850.6 million, an increase of \$100 million over the request, or 13.3 percent, and \$152.6 million, or 21.9 percent over the FY 2007 appropriation. The comparable figure from the House Subcommittee is \$822.6 million. The Committee report noted the importance of broadening participation in science and technology and specifies increased funding for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities - Undergraduate Program, the Louis Stokes Alliance Minority Participation programs, and the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, Talent Expansion program.

#### **Census Funding: 'Critical Year' for Decennial; SIPP Restored**

Acknowledging that the FY 2008 budget "is a critical year for the Census Bureau as it provides the foundation upon which a successful decennial census is built," the Committee provided \$1.248 billion for the Bureau's activities.

This included \$1.02 billion for Periodic Censuses and Programs, about \$7 million below the request. The panel's recommendation does not include funding for the American Community Survey's (ACS) Methods Panel. Noting that a recent Government Accountability Office review of the Methods Panel "revealed that Census officials were not able to provide detailed action plans or costs associated with aspects of this program," the Committee redirected this funding to higher priority programs within the Census Bureau.

The Committee also supported the use of automation "as an essential component of reengineering the process of counting the Nation's population." However, it remains concerned that the Bureau "recently reported hundreds of laptop computer and other electronic devices as being lost, stolen, or missing." Thus, it asks the Bureau to report on the "steps taken to ensure that adequate property controls are in effect for both electronic devices specifically acquired for the decennial census and for equipment generally purchased by the Bureau."

Responding to protests from the data-user community, the Senate panel included an additional \$26 million to the Salaries and Expenses (S&E) account to maintain the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The Committee report noted that combined with the \$19 million the Administration requested for SIPP's replacement, the undeveloped Dynamics of Economic Well-Being (DEWS), the level of funding should ensure a SIPP sample size of 45,000 in 25 states.

The S&E funding for FY 2008 is \$226.2 million, an increase of \$29.6 million over the FY 2007 appropriation. This includes full funding for the 2007 Economic Census and Census of Governments, and \$5.5 million "towards improved service sector measurements."

The Economic and Statistical Administration, which includes the Bureau of Economic Analysis, received the full FY 2008 requested level of \$85 million. This is \$5.2 million above the FY 2007 level.

#### **Bureau of Justice Statistics Cut Severely, Again**

Repeating a recent pattern, the Senate spending panel recommended a severe reduction for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) for FY 2008. The Committee allocated \$10 million for BJS, a cut of almost \$25 million from the FY 2007 level. The Committee report provided no explanation for the reduction. Last year, the Senate Committee reduced BJS funding to \$20 million, a cut of \$14.5 million. Since the House has not been as hostile to the agency as the Senate, BJS' final FY 2007 appropriation, funded in the Joint Resolution, was its FY 2006 level of \$34.7 million. If the \$10 million allocation holds through the process, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is dead.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) received \$60 million in base funding for FY 2008 from the Senate panel. This represents a slight increase over the \$55 million level for FY 2007. However, the Committee provided only \$2 million for NIJ from the Violence Against Women (VAW) account. In recent years, this funding was \$5 million. In addition, the Senate report divided the \$60 million up and recommended only \$5 million for Social Science Research and Evaluation. The current funding for NIJ's activities in this area is around \$17 million; \$12 million from base funding plus the \$5 million in VAW money.

After many delays, the full House Appropriations Committee expects to take up the recommendations of the House CJS Subcommittee the week of July 9.

## SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS ITS SIXTH AND FINAL APPROPRIATIONS HEARING FOR THE NIH

On June 22, the day after it had marked up its FY 2008 funding bill, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies held its sixth and final appropriation's hearing for the year on the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Subcommittee Chair Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) commented that the hearings were "informative" for him as well as for the staff and provided "a little more in-depth knowledge of what each institute is doing" and a better idea of where the Subcommittee's allocations ought to be going.

Harkin also commented on the Subcommittee's markup of the NIH's budget the previous day, noting that the \$1 billion increase in the agency's budget for FY 2008, will allow the NIH for the first time since FY 2005 to plan on increasing the cost of new grants by three percent. Acknowledging that it is "not big, but better than we have had," Harkin stressed that it will provide the full "committed level for non-competing grants for the first time." The Chairman also referenced the ten percent increase in the Common Fund, the set-aside to continue the National Children's Study (NCS), and additional support for young investigators included in the FY 2008 funding bill. According to Harkin, he and Ranking Member Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) wanted to do more for NIH and suggested that "when [the bill] goes to conference, maybe we'll do even more."

In his opening statement welcoming the NIH institute directors, Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS) noted that "we are learning a number of conditions afflicting our population are connected to environmental factors. It is important that we extend our resources from simply treating existing diseases to identifying ways to prevent them. As we learn more about the impact of the environment has on different disease processes, we're better positioned to identify prevention measures." Cochran noted that in the state of Mississippi, diabetes presents a very challenging situation with more cases as a percentage of its state's population than any other state in the union. Cochran also highlighted the National Children's Study (NCS) led by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and a consortium of federal agencies including the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The study is "uncovering disparities which need our attention and [NIH's] suggestions" as to what can be done in terms of national policy and funding priorities, he maintained.

NIH directors appearing before the Subcommittee included: Ruth Kirschstein [Acting Director, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM)]; Lawrence Tabek, [National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)]; David Schwartz, NIEHS; Paul Sieving [National Eye Institute (NEI)]; and Duane Alexander, NICHD.

### National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Kirschstein testified that since NCCAM was established by Congress, the Center has built a global scientific research enterprise for the study of complementary and alternative medicine. "The progress that has been made in understanding the scientific basis of CAM is attributable... to the leadership of Stephen Strauss, NCCAM's founding director," Kirschstein noted. Strauss died earlier this year. She pointed out that today we know many Americans are using CAM modalities in the effort to promote health and well-being and to preempt disease and disability. Integrative medicine which makes use of both conventional and complementary therapies to address all aspects of health and wellness, said Kirschstein, is "rapidly becoming a major force shaping health care in the U.S." She added that in addition, better communication between patients and their medical practitioners "is absolutely vital to ensure well-coordinated, comprehensive, and safe care." To this end, the Center has established a new patient provider educational initiative to encourage communication between patients and physicians about CAM use.

Kirschstein reported to the Subcommittee that in the past year NCCAM has launched new activities including, a program to assess the potential of community-based primary care research networks which will increase the knowledge about the efficacy and cost effectiveness of CAM modalities, as well as the safety of the approaches. NCCAM is also studying the mechanisms of action underlying manipulative and body-base practices such as chiropractic and developing innovative tools and technology to study biologically-based and mind-body

interventions. The Center's overall strategy is to support a diverse portfolio of basic, translational, and clinical studies, emphasized Kirschstein.

Responding to Harkin's reference to the importance of research training, Kirschstein stressed that NCCAM has a mandate to train the next generation of CAM researchers. Accordingly, since the Center's inception, NCCAM has increased the percentage of funds committed to research training and career development. The Center also has an online continuing education program that offers information on a variety of topics to help professionals, as well as the public.

### **National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research**

Tabek discussed NIDCR's strategy "to address the many complex diseases and conditions that fall under the mission" of his institute. According to Tabek, "complex diseases and conditions are those that result from an interplay between and among one's genes, environment, infectious agents, behavior, societal issues, and the unknown." A "good example" of complex disease, he pointed out, is early childhood caries, a condition where primary teeth can be decayed down to the gum line. "This is a condition that is found disproportionately amongst under-represented minority children," Tabek said. He testified that what is needed to overcome conditions such as early childhood caries "are inexpensive, simple and culturally-acceptably interventions." He cited as an example of such an intervention the use of fluoride varnish which can be highly effective in preventing childhood caries in the very young and the children at greatest risk.

### **National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences**

Schwartz testified that in the past, NIEHS' work has been to improve the average length and the quality of life by disease etiology and prevention of exposures that are relevant to disease etiology. He cited two examples of such work, air pollution and childhood lead exposure. The Institute funded the "Sick City Study" that focused on air pollution and identified it as a major cause of morbidity and mortality, especially related to heart and lung diseases. As a result of the research, new standards were adopted by the Environmental Protection Agency that changed the Clean Air Act and the standards in the U.S. for air pollution. Consequently, there have been marked decreases in the level of air pollution, but also marked improvement in morbidity and mortality related to air pollution contamination. Noting that collaborative work between the institute and the NICHD on childhood lead exposure showed a "very striking relationship between the concentration of lead in the blood of children and IQ, -- the higher the lead levels, the lower the IQ.

Schwartz called attention to the Institute's strategic plan which was developed shortly after his arrival, which has embedded in it several challenges to keep the institute attentive to its mission of focusing on specific exposures and diseases that are relevant to those specific exposures. He highlighted three "distinct" programs. The first program, HEAL (Head-off Environmental Asthma in Louisiana) is based on children moving back to New Orleans who are at very high risk for the development of asthma as a result of exposure to a contaminated environment. The project represents a public-private partnership among NIH's National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities, the New Orleans public health community, Tulane University, and the Merck Children's Asthma Network. The project is focused on an intervention program.

The second area highlighted by Schwartz was training and career development. According to the director, the NIEHS has revitalized its training. The program goes "all the way back to high school through college through early forms of training which reaches out to minority students, as well as physician scientists." It also concentrates on new investigators to help them develop a focus on environmental sciences and provide them opportunities for research in these sciences.

The third program highlighted was NIEHS's Exposure Biology Program that is part of the Genes, Environment and Health Initiative, supported by all of the NIH institutes and led by Schwartz and the director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, Francis Collins. The goal of the program, Schwartz explained, is to develop personalized sensors of exposure and biological response indicators. He related that "this program is essential to be able to look at the interaction between genes and environment in terms of the risk of developing disease. After all, for the foreseeable future, our main way of preventing disease will be to intervene in the environment, not to intervene genetically." Schwartz stressed that it is essential that we understand this relationship between genes and environment as a way of understanding risks related to human health. Noting that the Institute is focusing on a number of new research programs on complex diseases, such as asthma, neurodegenerative

diseases and arthritis that are caused by both genetic and environmental factors, Schwartz emphasized that “we believe very strongly that the environment will be very helpful in identifying the genes that are important in terms of the risk of developing disease.”

### **National Eye Institute**

NEI director Paul Sieving informed the Subcommittee that vision loss starts in childhood and persists for a lifetime. In fact, many of the eye diseases Americans suffer actually increase with age. With the increasing longevity of Americans, Sieving explained that we can expect a rise in the prevalence of some of these conditions related to aging. He focused his testimony on the “storyline of remarkable success involving age-related macular degeneration (AMD),” a condition in which central vision is affected. Sieving highlighted the Age-Related Eye Disease Study, a NEI-sponsored study which ran for seven years with a focus on prevention. The study focused on the daily use of antioxidant vitamins and minerals and found that this approach delayed onset to serious vision loss in AMD by 25 percent. A remarkable success, Sieving declared.

Noting that scientists have suspected for many years that genetic factors play a role in AMD, Sieving informed the Subcommittee of recent studies that have identified four to five genes for AMD. He further pointed out that there are some 450 genes that have been found to cause eye disease. The fact that the Institute can take to the American people from a basic genetic study is the “recognition that the environmental factors . . . and lifestyle factors,” play on the genetic background to further increase the risk of developing AMD, Sieving maintained.

### **National Institute of Child Health and Human Development**

“Since the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development was established nearly 45 years ago, our scientists have made discoveries and improved the health and well being of children and adults,” Alexander testified. Responding to a question from Harkin regarding the relationship between immunizations that children get and autism, Alexander noted that a “payoff benefit from the National Children’s Study (NCS)” is that autism will be one of the key outcome variables. With a prevalence of six per thousand, he explained, we’ll have 600 kids in a 100,000 cohort with autism and 99,000 controls. So we will get information on these children - DNA from both parents and the child and its siblings - Alexander explained. The NCS will also follow the environment that the child lives in, measuring environmental exposures. It will also measure the vaccinations and immunizations the child gets through the full course of their medical history. The study, he continued, will provide this information prospectively, allowing for the analysis of the gene environment interactions, tracing the interactions between different environmental exposures on each other, and permitting a look at these in relationship to family history.

Alexander informed the Subcommittee that with the funding provided by the Congress this year, the NCS will recruit the first one-third of the 105 sites around the country that will conduct the study. Those will be funded by September 30, 2007. The already-named seven vanguard centers will recruit the subjects for the pilot phase that will begin in July 2008. The following year another third of the sites will be added, and the final third the following year. The actual recruitment of the full study cohort will begin in 2009. NCS will also set up the repository center of laboratories that are going to do the analyses, and the data collection systems which will be electronic, testified Alexander.

## **SCIENCE BOARD TELLS NSF TO SUPPORT MORE ‘TRANSFORMATIVE’ RESEARCH**

The National Science Board (NSB), which provides oversight for and establishes the policies of the National Science Foundation (NSF), has published a report recommending “a new, distinct, and separate Foundation-wide program designed specifically to solicit and to support transformational and paradigm-challenging proposals.” This, the Board claimed, “would send a clear message to scientists that NSF will consider and support risky and challenging ideas.”

The report asks NSF to consider defining ‘transformative’ research “as research driven by ideas that have the potential to radically change our understanding of an important existing scientific or engineering concept or leading to the creation of a new paradigm or field of science or engineering. Such research also is characterized

by its challenge to current understanding or its pathway to new frontiers." The NSB suggests that NSF begin this Foundation-wide initiative as soon as possible and that it "develop a means to initiate this program in FY 2008."

Why the urgency? The Board explains that National Institutes of Health (NIH) is funding such "high-risk, high-impact" research through its Roadmap. Also, that the many reports, such as the National Academies' *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, suggest that "failure to encourage and to support revolutionary ideas will jeopardize not only our Nation's ability to compete in today's and tomorrow's global economy, but also the progress of science as a whole."

Part of the rationale for this new emphasis, the NSB asserted, comes from the scientific community's perception that NSF's Merit Review process does not provide enough opportunities for funding radical or paradigm-challenging research because 'transformative' research "questions the status quo by proposing new ways of approaching a fundamental scientific question." Thus, the Board posited, "experts [who serve on review panels] in the areas being challenged may dismiss such ideas by pronouncing the research overreaching or without basis." This perception, the NSB claimed, makes many researchers "unlikely to submit paradigm-challenging ideas to NSF."

Although, the report pointed out, that NSF has mechanisms such as Program Officer discretion to consider "the potential for significant impact in the field," and the Small Grants for Exploratory Research (SGER) awards, these are not adequate "to ensure that transformative research proposals are solicited, evaluated, and funded." Even though NSF awarded many SGER grants in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the NSB concluded that this mechanism is "underutilized." In FY 2004, NSF directorates expended only 0.5 percent of eligible SGER funds. NSF is currently examining the SGER mechanism and portfolio to determine its effectiveness in nurturing transformative ideas.

The NSF leadership, which according to the Board, is "essential" to the Transformative Research Initiative, has been asked to respond to the report's recommendations at the NSB's next meeting on August 7 and 8, 2007. NSF Director Arden Bement has suggested to Congress that almost all the research NSF supports is 'transformative,' since you can never know what basic research project will emerge as the paradigm-shifting study that changes how science is done.

## PROGRESS REPORT IN FOR CENSUS BUREAU'S LUCA PROGRAM

The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program is a decennial census geographic partnership program that will allow the Census Bureau to benefit from local knowledge in developing its Master Address File (MAF) for the 2010 Census. On June 26, the House Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives held a hearing to examine issues relating to the LUCA program. Specifically, the Subcommittee received up-to-date accounts of the program and discussed ways to increase local government participation.

In his opening remarks, Subcommittee Chairman William 'Lacy' Clay (D-MO) stressed that public outreach and cultivation of trust are vital factors in obtaining an accurate 2010 count. Clay clarified that "the Census counts people where they reside and each individual's location is determined not by name, telephone number, or other personally identifiable information, but by address." He went on to say that an accurate enumeration of the population requires the Bureau to have current and complete address lists and maps. Clay referenced the 2000 census as an example of the importance for improving local government participation in the program. First implemented for the 2000 Census, the LUCA program resulted in a significant undercount, recounted Clay: "For the 2000 Census, 53 percent of the 39,051 local entities that were eligible to participate chose not to do so."

Matthew Scire of the Government Accountability Office reported on the current status of the LUCA effort and how the Bureau is addressing prior issues and new challenges associated with implementation. Scire based his assessment on a recent report on how the Bureau has improved the program since the last decennial. He noted that: "The Bureau has completed nearly all of its planned LUCA Dress Rehearsal operations in accordance with its published timeline, and has taken steps to reduce participant workload and burden and improve training." Scire pointed out that the Bureau should take steps to mitigate possible difficulties that participants may have with new LUCA software and training. Specifically, he suggested, "the Bureau could do more to assess the usability of software designed to assist LUCA participants in reviewing and updating address and map data and to test computer-based training."

In preparation for the 2010 Census, the Bureau has selected Fayetteville, NC as one of the locations to conduct a dress rehearsal. Robert Coats, the Governor's Census Liaison from the Office of State Budget and Management for the State of North Carolina, commented on the successes and challenges of the LUCA dress rehearsal thus far. "The key to success of the LUCA program," he testified, "is communication with the officials, as well as education and promotion about the impact of LUCA on their communities through better data from the decennial Census and the American Community Survey." Coats believes that while some local government staff may have worked with LUCA for Census 2000, most current elected officials were not in office then and were not familiar with the program. He also indicated that although the invitation and promotional letters were a good step in establishing "buy-in" from local leaders, to improve participation even farther, the Bureau should utilize local resources, such as State Data Centers or Governors' Offices, to stress the local importance of participation.

Keith Hite, President of the National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT), shared how his organization has been working hard to encourage its members to accept invitations to fully participate in the LUCA program. A supporter of the program, NATaT represents more than 12,000 towns and townships across America. "Towns and townships cannot afford to be undercounted in the 2010 census," said Hite. "LUCA provides smaller communities an opportunity to avoid an undercount and help keep population estimates accurate," Hite continued.

Census Director Louis Kincannon, who remains at the helm despite his announcement last November that he was retiring, reported on the Bureau's decennial activities. Kincannon suggested that valuable lessons were learned during the 2000 Census that serve as the foundation of the plans for the 2010 count. "One of the notable changes from Census 2000," Kincannon noted, "is that we are inviting states to participate directly and review the census address list for the entire state and substate areas." Kincannon followed up by saying that this improvement is intended to capitalize on expertise at the state level and to compensate when smaller governments are unable to participate because of resource constraints. Kincannon also announced that for the 2010 Census governments will have 120 days, rather than 90, to review materials, which will allow governments to plan and review their address lists more thoroughly and effectively.

This is the second in a series of oversight hearings that the Subcommittee will hold examining the Census Bureau's preparations for the 2010 Census. So far, Census officials believe the planning is proceeding according to their plans.

## HAGY NOMINATED TO HEAD NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

After serving as Principal Deputy Director (in essence Acting Director) since December 2006, David W. Hagy has been nominated by the President to become the Director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). Aside from currently leading NIJ, Hagy also serves at the Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). If confirmed by the Senate, Hagy would become the first non-acting NIJ head since Sarah Hart left in August 2005. Glenn Schmitt served as NIJ's Acting Director in the interim.

Hagy joined OJP in September 2005. Prior to this, he served as Director for Local Coordination in the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness at the Department of Homeland Security. Earlier in his career, he served as Chief of Staff and Policy Director for Harris County, Texas Judge Robert Eckels. Hagy received his bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University, and his master's degree and Ph.D. in Political Science from Tulane University.

Hagy's nomination, according to the White House web page, has not officially reached the Senate yet. Given the continuing disputes between the White House and the Senate Judiciary Committee, which would handle Hagy's confirmation, it could be a while before the new NIJ Director becomes official.

## MEDIA VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN: RESEARCH VS. THE FIRST AMENDMENT

On June 26, the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee held a hearing on the ever-popular soapbox target: media violence and its effects on children. Many researchers and child advocates believe that violent television programming poses a health risk to children and therefore Congress and the Federal

Communications Commission (FCC) should implement restrictions. Sen. John D. Rockefeller (D-WV), who chaired the hearing, in his opening statement gave a blistering indictment of the entertainment industry and its failure to do more to protect children from violent programming. "I hold the entertainment industry responsible. Decades of scientific research have shown that violent television programming has detrimental impacts on the development of children," he declared.

Research cited in the U.S. Surgeon General's 1972 report, the National Institute of Mental Health's report in 1982, and the three-year national television violence study in the 1990's as well as studies conducted by the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, have all demonstrated that violent programming is harmful to children.

After years of what many feel are inadequate and ineffective voluntary reforms, children's advocates say that young people are still subjected to unprecedented levels of violent programming. In January, the Parents Television Council (PTC) released its report, *Dying to Entertain*. The report concluded that last year's television season was the most violent that the PTC has ever recorded, with an average of 4.41 instances of violence per hour during primetime. This translates into an act of violence occurring once every 13½ minutes, an increase of 75 percent since 1998.

Jeff J. McIntyre of the American Psychological Association (APA) testified that "among the factors that place youth at risk for committing an act of violence are exposure to acts of violence. This includes, but is not limited to, those in the media." He stated that every exposure a child has to an act of violence, increases the chances of violent behavior. McIntyre further related that the research shows that children who have prolonged exposure to violence not only have an increased risk for aggressive behavior, but also become desensitized to violent acts and have an unrealistic fear of becoming a victim of violence.

These worries about an increased propensity for violent behavior are at the core of public health concerns about televised violence. Dale Kunkel, professor at the University of Arizona, stated that while exposure to media violence is not necessarily the most crucial contributing factor in violence and aggression, it is certainly the most pervasive. Millions of children spend an average of 20 or more hours per week watching television, and this cumulative exposure to violent images can shape young minds in unhealthy ways. "Indeed, it is the cumulative nature of children's exposure to thousands and thousands of violent images over time that constitutes the risk of harmful effects," testified Kunkel.

Pointing out the difficulties associated with any governmental action against television programs, Rockefeller said "I know that Congress has been reluctant to take on the issue of violence, [but] we have a moral obligation to tackle television violence and arm our parents with the tools to make their children safer." Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK) indicated that although Congress needs to address violent television programming, "I think we have to tread a lot softer." Stevens believes that "clearly the Supreme Court has laid down some guidelines in the past" in terms of constitutional restraints that will prevent Congress from going too far in trying to regulate the entertainment industry.

Laurence Tribe, professor at Harvard Law School and testifying on behalf of the Ad Hoc Media Coalition, argued that violent television content, whether it educates or merely entertains, is protected by the First Amendment. Because of this protection, the government is strictly limited in the means in which it may regulate speech. Tribe testified that even "assuming that the goal of limiting children's access to violent television programming is a compelling interest, regulation of speech to achieve that goal is unacceptable if less restrictive alternatives would be at least as effective in achieving the legitimate purpose that the statute was enacted to serve." He remarked that there are numerous alternatives available to parents wishing to restrict violent television programming. The Supreme Court has signaled approval of these voluntary measures to centralized regulations such as time channeling and unbundling. Other alternatives, such as the V-chip and parental controls, avoid possible First Amendment violations by empowering parents rather than Congress or the FCC to control what children see on television.

However, Kunkel suggested that although the courts have ruled that there must be evidence of a compelling governmental interest in order for Congress to take action that would regulate television content, such evidence exists. He argued that the documented risks of the harmful effects from children's exposure to televised violence clearly meet this threshold. Despite the research, Tribe still asserted that the First Amendment "does not tolerate such a legislated shift from individualized determination of proper expression. Any regulation of



television content must recognize that our system of government rightfully places this determination in the hands of individual families and parents, not those of Big Brother.”

Although in the minority, several Senators expressed the need for more parental involvement rather than government interference in regulating what children watched. Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR) said that: “The federal government can be no substitute for good parenting.” Stevens added: “I think there is a little bit of education involved here, as far as parents are concerned.”

There appears little hope among advocates pushing for restraint that the entertainment industry will willingly change itself. According to Rockefeller, “the big media companies have placed a greater emphasis on their corporate short-term profits than on the long-term health and well being of our children.” Since Congress tends to hold hearings on this issue fairly regularly, the discussion is far from over.

## RECEPTION HONORS RETURN OF CORA MARRETT

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, COSSA joined with the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the American Sociological Association (ASA) to honor the return of Cora Marrett to the National Science Foundation (NSF). The reception was held at the Helen Dwight Reid Education Foundation mansion in Washington, DC.

Marrett, who served as the first Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate from 1992-96, returned to NSF in February to become the Assistant Director for the Education and Human Resources (EHR) directorate. As ASA’s Executive Officer Sally Hillsman noted, Marrett is the first person to ever lead two NSF directorates.

AERA Executive Director Felice Levine and COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver also delivered welcome back remarks. NSF Director Arden Bement, as well as two other Assistant Directors for SBE, Norman Bradburn (2000-2004) and David Lightfoot (2004-present), joined the crowd of close to 100 people.

Marrett mentioned that she was delighted to be back in Washington and at NSF after stints as Provost at the University of Massachusetts and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin System office. She also expressed her hope that the communities represented by COSSA, ASA, and AERA would help in enhancing EHR’s efforts to improve Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education. Mentioning the many proposals by the Congress and the Administration to improve STEM education, she suggested that research and evaluation would also play an important role in achieving the desired goals.

## COALITION HOLDS EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTING NSF-SUPPORTED RESEARCH

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) held its thirteenth annual exhibition and reception on June 26. Eleven Members of Congress, National Science Foundation (NSF) Director Arden Bement and Deputy Director Kathie Olsen, as well as close to 500 other congressional and agency staff and people from the Washington science and technology community, jammed three rooms in the Rayburn House Office Building to view 35 examples of NSF-supported scientific discovery and learning. COSSA was a co-sponsor of the exhibition.

The social, behavioral, and economic sciences (SBE) were well represented among the exhibits. The American Psychological Association presented the study of Hillary Anger Elfenbein of the University of California, Berkeley, on *Recognizing Emotion Across Cultures: Implications for National Security and Conflict Negotiation*. Elfenbein’s study was one of those attacked on the House floor by Rep. John Campbell (R-CA) as part of his attempt to defund seven studies during the debate on the NSF reauthorization (see Update, [May 14, 2007](#)). Rep. Brian Baird (R-WA), who strongly and successfully defended Elfenbein’s study, attended the reception and stopped by to discuss the study’s important contribution to the Nation’s national security.

The American Educational Research Association brought in its current President, William Tate of Washington University at St. Louis, to present *Supporting the Advancement of Science Education with Geospatial Mapping*. Rep. William ‘Lacy’ Clay (D-MO), who earlier in the day had chaired a hearing on the Census Bureau (see other story), came by to discuss Tate’s research.

Andrew Beveridge of Queens College and the City University of New York's Graduate Center, demonstrated his work on *Visualizing U.S. Social Change*, sponsored by the American Sociological Association. The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) had Maggie Bruck of Johns Hopkins University exhibit her work on *How Trustworthy is Children's Testimony*. Lingxin Hao, also of Johns Hopkins represented the Population Association of America and the Association of Population Centers and presented his work on *Immigration, Race and Wealth Gaps*.

The Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences' exhibit demonstrated how *NSF Collaboratories Transform Neuroscience Research and Education*, the work of Elliot Albers of Georgia State University and his colleagues at the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience. This highly interactive exhibit included a virtual reality experience of driving through the desert in Iraq in an army jeep. A number of Members of Congress as well as NSF Director Bement took the harrowing trip. The research is used to help returning members of the U.S. armed forces cope with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The CNSF is an alliance of over 100 organizations united by a concern for the future vitality of the national science, mathematics, and engineering enterprise. CNSF supports the goal of increasing the national investment in the NSF's research and education programs in response to the unprecedented scientific, technological, and economic opportunities facing the United States. COSSA is a member of CNSF, and its Executive Director, Howard Silver, chaired the Coalition from 1994-2000. Sam Rankin, head of the Washington office of the American Mathematical Society, is the current chairman.

## SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The Department of Defense Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA) Behavioral Science Directorate solicits new proposals for its 4th Quarter FY 2007 and FY 2008 contract program of applied research in behavioral and social science. Awards, if any, will take the form of contracts.

The purpose of the research is (1) to develop, test and evaluate the application (translation) of known principles and findings of the behavioral and social sciences to enhancing capabilities relevant to current and future intelligence, counter-intelligence, and human intelligence collection; and (2) to understand threats to national security in terms of the principles and methods of the social and behavioral sciences. A portion of the funding may be made available for meritorious proposals from minority institutions and historically Black colleges and universities, and these entities are encouraged to participate. The methods, data and all analyses will be unclassified.

No consideration can be given to purely fundamental (basic) research projects. However, support will be given to projects that have both basic and applied components; e.g., where investigations in laboratory settings help to understand specific complexities in the field, or where basic and applied approaches are directed concurrently at the same problem.

CIFAs areas of interest for this Broad Agency Announcement are:

A. Counter-Surveillance Detection Tool: to evaluate, via field testing, scientifically valid and culturally sensitive Commercial Off-the-Shelf Software and government-funded instruments that have been developed to aid case officers engaged in assessing sources and detecting surveillance. Evaluations will require interviews with training and operational personnel engaged in behavioral assessments within operational settings to characterize current practices and itemize what practitioners.

B. Cultural Training Tools: to develop and test indirect assessment methodologies that measure the beliefs of members of a non-Western culture about the behaviors associated with truth-telling and deception within their own culture, and national security investigators about the behaviors associated with truth-telling and deception within that same non-Western culture.

C. Effective Interviewing and Elicitation Techniques: for the further development and validation testing one or more methods of interviewing unwilling subjects that already has been shown effective in controlled (laboratory) settings.

D. Effective Training in Interviewing and Elicitation Techniques: for the development and evaluation of a training course that takes advantage of what has been shown to be valid in other domains (e.g., marketing, clinical medicine, clinical psychology), such as computer-based structured interviews or training tapes that use actor-based live interviews (these are given as examples, not as requirements).

E. Multicultural & Urban Intelligence: to develop and test a method to assess a local population's reactions to its local law enforcement policies and procedures, with initial testing of the method within an urban population within the U.S., in collaboration with the local law enforcement agency or department.

F. Real-time Integration & Analysis Tool: for preliminary investigation of the use of sensing and tracking technologies to complement observer-based source and asset assessments, for the development of algorithms to integrate these data on a real-time basis, and for evaluation of these technologies using traditional, observer-based methodologies.

If any awards are made on any area of interest, CIFA anticipates that individual awards will be in the \$100,000 to \$300,000 range. All proposals may request funding for a timeframe not to exceed 12 months.

While Concept Papers are optional, CIFA invites potential applicants who would like an early indication of the suitability of their topics to submit Concept Papers by e-mail (preferred) to: [Loretta.Buckley@cifa.mil](mailto:Loretta.Buckley@cifa.mil).

For FY 2007 funding consideration, electronic versions of the formal proposals must be received at CIFA by e-mail no later than 3:30 P.M. EST on 1 August 2007. These files must be e-mailed to: [Loretta.Buckley@cifa.mil](mailto:Loretta.Buckley@cifa.mil). CIFA intends to make contract awards for areas of interest, if at all, between 1 September 2007 and September 30, 2008.

For more information contact: Loretta Buckley, Contract Specialist, Phone (703) 699-7283, Email: [Loretta.Buckley@cifa.mil](mailto:Loretta.Buckley@cifa.mil) or go to: <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/> select the FedBizopps vendor's button located at the center of the page; select the "Find Business opportunities" GO button located on the upper left of the page; and in the full text search box enter: CIFA

## REDUCING HEALTH DISPARITIES AMONG MINORITY AND UNDERSERVED CHILDREN

The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI); the National Institute on Alcohol, Alcoholism, and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA); the National Cancer Institute (NCI); and the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) are seeking research proposals designed to reduce health disparities among minority and underserved children. Specifically, the announcement ([PA-07-391](#)) focuses on ethnic and minority children and underserved populations of children such as: children from low literacy, rural and low-income populations, geographically isolated children, hearing and visually impaired children, physically or mentally disabled children, children of migrant workers, children from immigrant and refugee families, and language minority children.

The primary purpose of the initiative is to solicit intervention studies targeting the populations mentioned above. Rather than a singular approach, it encourages interventions using a multilevel approach (individual, health system, community, societal). The announcement also encourages basic studies designed to further delineate mechanisms/pathways of disparities that lead to the development of interventions. Specific targeted areas of research include biobehavioral studies that incorporate multiple factors that influence child health disparities such as biological, lifestyle factors, environmental (physical and environments) and social (e.g., peer influences), economic, institutional, and cultural and family influences; studies that target the specific health promotion needs of children with a known illness and/or disability; and studies that test and evaluate the cost effectiveness of health promotion interventions conducted in nontraditional settings. Potential areas of research include, but do not exhaust, the following potential areas:

- Studies that incorporate multiple factors such as: genetic, physiological, social psychological, economic and demographic, environmental, and cultural factors believed to influence child health disparities.

- Interventions designed to reduce risk factors and exposures that lead to development of one or more poor health outcomes.
- Culturally and developmentally appropriate interventions that promote increased physical activity and healthier dietary intake or other health enhancing child health behaviors (e.g., reduction in TV viewing).
- Studies that employ economic incentives to promote health.
- Interventions studies targeting well-child care, preventive care, or developmental (early interventional or rehabilitative) care.
- Interventions that target the specific health promotion needs of children with a known illness and/or disability.
- Studies that evaluate how gender, health literacy and immigrant status (including legal and visa status) affect children health and access to health care.
- Studies of racism and racial discrimination as well as other forms of discrimination and its impact on children and caregiver experiences, health and access to health care.
- Culturally sensitive intervention studies targeting patient-provider respect, communication, interactions and trust in relationships, health care utilization and health outcomes.
- Interventions studies that target children's and parents' health beliefs, health literacy and the influence of peers and culture on health behaviors, health care utilization and health outcomes.
- Studies of racial socialization, children's emerging ethnic identity and gender roles and their impact on health behaviors and health outcomes.
- Interventions to identify and treat underserved, minority children at risk for adverse physical and mental health outcomes resulting from alcohol involvement such as children of parents or other caretakers impaired by alcohol disorders and who fail to access suitable and consistent healthcare for their children; or underserved adolescents already drinking or a high risk of initiating drinking.

For more information see <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-391>.

## NIH SEEKS COMMENTS ON SYSTEM TO SUPPORT BIOMEDICAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH AND PEER REVIEW

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking comments regarding its support of biomedical and behavioral research, including peer review. The goal of the request for information is to examine the current system to optimize its efficiency and effectiveness. The agency is especially interested in creative, concrete suggestions to six questions, "even if they involve radical changes to the current approach." **Responses will be accepted until August 17, 2007.**

In June, the agency formed a Working Group of the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director to gather information from the extramural community and explore possible enhancements to all aspects of the system to support biomedical and behavioral science, including the two-tiered review process (see Update, [June 11, 2007](#)). The Working Groups efforts will complement the activities being undertaken by the Center for Scientific Review (CSR) which are designed to streamline and improve the efficiency of the current peer review system, including shortening the review cycle and the length of applications and enhancing the use of electronic information (see Update, [April 30, 2007](#)).

Information is requested includes:

1. **Challenges of NIH System of Research Support**

Please describe any specific challenges presented by NIH's support of biomedical and behavioral research such as the current array of grant mechanisms, number of grants awarded per investigator, and the duration of grants.

2. **Challenges of NIH Peer Review Process**

Please describe any specific challenges presented by the current peer review process at NIH.

3. **Solutions to Challenges**

Please concisely describe specific approaches or concepts that would address any of the above challenges, even if it involves a radical change to the current approach.

4. **Core Values of NIH Peer Review Process**

Please describe the core values of NIH peer review that must be maintained or enhanced.

5. **Peer Review Criteria and Scoring**

Are the appropriate criteria (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-05-002.html>) and scoring procedures (<http://cms.csr.nih.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B2CFE17E-AA1C-46E5-BADB-FDBF2FBBEE80/11892/CSRScoringProcedure090706.pdf>) being used by NIH to evaluate applications during peer review? If not, are there changes in either that you would recommend?

6. **Career Pathways**

Is the current peer review process for investigators at specific stages in their career appropriate? If not, what changes would you recommend?

Responses may be submitted through the following website:

[http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfi\\_peer\\_review\\_add.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfi_peer_review_add.htm) and/or email address:  
[PeerReviewRFI@mail.nih.gov](mailto:PeerReviewRFI@mail.nih.gov).

## CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

# COSSA

Executive Director: Howard J. Silver, Ph.D.

Deputy Director for Health Policy: Angela L. Sharpe

Associate Director for Public Affairs: Pamela L. Pressley

Assistant Director for Government Affairs: La Tosha C. Lewis

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is an advocacy organization promoting attention to and federal support for the social and behavioral sciences.

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## GOVERNING MEMBERS

American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Economic Association  
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American Historical Association  
American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Criminology  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association

Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Law Schools  
Law and Society Association  
Linguistic Society of America  
Midwest Political Science Association  
National Communication Association  
Rural Sociological Society  
Society for Research in Child Development

## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

American Agricultural Economics Association  
American Association for Agricultural Education  
Association for Asian Studies  
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management  
Association of Research Libraries  
Council on Social Work Education  
Eastern Sociological Society  
International Communication Association  
Justice Research and Statistics Association  
Midwest Sociological Society  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Council on Family Relations

North American Regional Science Council  
North Central Sociological Association  
Population Association of America  
Social Science History Association  
Society for Research on Adolescence  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues  
Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality  
Sociologists for Women in Society  
Southern Political Science Association  
Southern Sociological Society  
Southwestern Social Science Association

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## CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

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American Institutes for Research  
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Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research  
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National Bureau of Economic Research  
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